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# THE AMERICAN COLLEGE BULLETIN

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Executive Secretary, ROBERT L. KELLY  
Survey Secretary, B. WARREN BROWN

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## RELIGIOUS WORK AT UNIVERSITIES CENTERS

One of the most difficult of the problems confronting the forces in religious education has been the proper approach to the field of tax-supported institutions. For years there had been doubts in the minds of many church leaders as to the wisdom of entering this field. There was a disposition to regard it as an alternative to the Christian College. Among those who accepted this task no agreement could be reached as to method, so that today there are at least six different types of religious work for students fostered by as many denominations. To a great extent also the burden of this work was left to the Christian Associations, which were admirably equipped for certain phases of it and poorly equipped for others. In short there has been much neglect and confusion, legal restriction and financial limitation, at a time when the schools were growing by leaps and bounds. It is with genuine gratitude and relief, therefore, that we note in the past two years, not only a growing appreciation of the importance of this field, but a closer sense of unity in its approach.

All the leading denominations are now definitely committed to this work. Various types of activity ranging from schools of religion to student clubs have been tried out. Conferences held at Cleveland in 1915-16 and at Chicago in 1918 marked stages in the correlation of these interests. Careful surveys of the field in 1914 and again in 1918 showed what progress had been made. And now at the beginning of 1919 with a basis in experience to build on, the outlook for religious work in state institutions is more promising than ever in the past. At a recent joint session of the Council of Church Boards of Education and the Association of Church Workers in Universities, the conditions affecting this work after the war were fully and freely discussed. The constructive thought of that meeting took shape in the resolutions pre-

sented by Dr. Richard C. Hughes, chairman of the Committee on University work. These resolutions as proposed and adopted, January 8th, 1919, are presented herewith.

"Recognizing the value of the American tax-supported system of education as one of the most powerful socializing and democratizing agencies and the fact that these institutions are supplying a constantly increasing number of leaders of thought and action, and recognizing the limitations under which they must work when dealing with religious education and problems of personal religion, and recognizing their desire for the active cooperation of the churches to the end that they may be able to provide a more complete education that shall include religion, and recognizing the responsibility of the churches for training a Christian citizenship and leadership for the nation, the Council of Church Boards of Education reaffirms its policy and program of religious education.

"1. The objective is to present Jesus Christ as the Divine Savior and Master of life, and to so present the teaching of Christ that it will be accepted as the divine rule of life for the individual and for society; to develop the spiritual life in individuals and to promote the Kingdom of God on earth.

"2. As the conditions within and surrounding the state universities and colleges vary greatly, it is not practicable to present a standardized plan of operation for the work of the churches. We are, however, agreed as to the essential equipment and general methods that are applicable in all centers.

"3. Churches that are so located as to be able to minister to students and faculty should, in their preaching and public worship, their community service and world-wide missions, represent the best thought and life of the denomination and be developed into effective centers for Christian education. When the local community is unable to support such a church, the national Board or Boards should cooperate with the local church in providing building and equipment and annual maintenance.

"4. For a complete physical equipment there should be a church building, furnished with suitable and adequate rooms for classes and social purposes and a residence headquarters for each church representative, located close to the center of the student population. Experience seems to indicate that such a building should be a private residence. In some university centers, it may be wise to provide a union religious center building.

"5. Each denomination having any considerable number of students in the institution should employ at least one representative who

shall give entire time to pastoral work and religious instruction. These church representatives, whether called student pastors, university pastors, church workers, resident minister or rector, or by any other title, should be selected, not only for their personal qualities as efficient pastors, but also for their ability as religious teachers able to give instruction in one specialized field of religion, so that the group of church representatives shall form a faculty of religious instruction, providing a well-rounded curriculum.

"6. It is understood that while all instruction in religion should be of university grade and spirit, it is intended for practical results in daily life and service.

"7. The union of all Christian agencies at work in each center with full and visible recognition of the identification of their interests, is essential to the success of the enterprise and the spiritual welfare of the students.

"8. When it is not found practicable to furnish adequate financial support for a complete staff of church workers, two or more cooperating denominations should, through their proper Boards, unite in the support of one or more church workers, recognizing that this enterprise is not primarily intended to conserve the particular interests of the denomination, but is the unselfish contribution of the Church to the promotion of a Christian citizenship for the Nation. Therefore, the great churches with a nation-wide constituency ought to feel their responsibility for those institutions where the number of their students may be small.

"9. In each university center one or more of the church representatives should be especially charged with the responsibility of giving counsel in the choice of a vocation to the end that students may learn to choose their life work with a clear view of rendering the largest unselfish service for the best good of the world. Special attention should be given to the enlistment for the Christian ministry and Christian teaching and to committing those who choose other vocations to volunteer service in the church as laymen.

"10. Working together at a common task is the surest and safest method of bringing about the organic union of the churches. This organized cooperation of a group of denominations to provide Christian Education, training for Christian service and to develop loyalty to the organized church, will not only promote the spirit of unity in the cooperating agencies, but will train large numbers of students to propagate the same spirit and plan in their home communities. Leaving these students adrift in their religious life without personal allegiance to any denomination operates to delay the proper unity of the churches.

"11. The Council of Church Boards of Education hereby pledges to use its executive offices in working out and maintaining practical plans of active cooperation in each university center."

In presenting these resolutions, Dr. Hughes made a statement of the situation which challenges the attention of every student of this problem. A portion of his address is quoted here.

#### QUOTATION FROM ADDRESS OF DR. HUGHES

"During this next ten year period we may expect to see a larger expansion of the public school system than in any ten years of the past. Every good citizen ought not only to rejoice in this, but to lend his full influence to this most wholesome movement in American life. The churches, however, must not overlook the fact, as they have in the past, that these public schools and universities are either neglecting religion or struggling with the problem with a totally inadequate equipment for its solution."

"When the schools and universities were small, the student body nearly of one sort, and the curriculum not as crowded as it is today, teachers were able to deal with the religious life of the students and such questions as that of the separation of Church and State were not raised as objections. In those days the local churches had more direct influence with the young people and religious instruction in the home was far more common. Today, all this is changed. The student body is complex, representing all types of religious faith and even when Bible reading is allowed, it must be without comment, and all Bible instruction that is intended to affect the conscience and life must be left to the parents or to the Church."

"Pupils in elementary schools are fairly well cared for by the Sunday Schools. There is, however, a general lack of trained teachers, of separate class rooms and of sufficient time for class instruction. The average church does not yet divide its resources between the preaching and pastoral work on the one side and instruction on the other, in proportion to the importance of the latter, and it is doing more for young children than it is for the students in high school and colleges."

"The churches have apparently taken it for granted that the responsibility for the moral and religious life of the pupils belongs to the school. This may come over from the time when the churches supported academies and colleges for practically all her youth and then looked to these institutions to give the necessary religious instruction. Church people acting as citizens will tax themselves freely to build a modern high school with library, laboratories and separate rooms for all classes and then erect a costly church with a large auditorium for the preaching service and without a single class room for the high

school youth of the congregation. Churches in university centers where there are from one to eight thousand students seem satisfied if they provide one or two meagerly furnished class rooms. If the church is to retain and increase her influence during these coming years, she must go into the business of religious education as seriously as the community has gone into that of secular education. If she cannot do this within her own building, she must make other provisions or join with a community school of religion.

"The tax-supported universities, colleges and schools expect the churches to take the lead in this religious instruction. Enough has been accomplished during the past ten years to mark in clear outline the method for the next ten years."

### **A UNITED FRONT**

In harmony with the resolutions adopted by the Council, steps have already been taken to combine more effectively the forces of Christian education for the great task presented here. It is generally recognized that conditions following the war demand from the church a more united front in approaching its task and the Church Boards of Education are taking steps to squarely meet this demand in their work with students. We can certainly affect the Church of the next generation by developing churches of the right sort in the college and university centers.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

Here is an illustration of how these principles may work out. A committee of Secretaries of the Church Boards of Education visited East Lansing, Michigan, a few days ago, and advised with representatives of the local churches and Christian Associations as to what was needed to adequately meet the religious needs of the students in Michigan Agricultural College.

Lansing is a prosperous city but is three miles from the College and its churches are too far away to minister to many of the college people. East Lansing is a community of about 1,200 people. The number of students varies from 1,200 to 2,000 and there is but one church in the community.

After a thorough presentation of all the facts, it was the unanimous opinion of the conference that the one church should be developed into a strong community church and that in addition to the minister of this church and the officers of the Christian Associations in the College, there was need of one well trained pastor of students. The community church as at present organized, is able to meet its own expenses and contribute to the work with students, but cannot and ought not to bear the re-

sponsibility of the entire task. Accordingly, three denominations, through their Boards of Education, have agreed to pay equal shares of the salary and expenses for this student pastor, and to lend their aid to raising a fund for enlarging the church building. A fourth denomination has the matter under consideration and is expected to join the other three and the agreement leaves room for any others who may care to join.

It is not expected that the conditions which obtain here will be exactly duplicated in any other place. But there are many university fields in which the need for co-operation is fully equal to this. The purpose of the committee, therefore, is not to apply a rigid formula to widely varying conditions. It is rather to approach each situation with that spirit of harmony which, while taking account of local differences, will present a united and efficient front for the purpose of Christian education.